METIS OF THE NORTHWEST

LOUIS RIEL'S TESTIMONY AS TO THEIR ORIGIN.

Their Relationship to the Indian—The Value of the Land—A council of Hunters—The Pursuit of the Buffalo.

The Montreal Star of Saturday last devotes a whole page to the publication of a paper entitled "History les Metis du Nord-Ouest," by the late Louis Riel. Side by side with the English translation is the original French text, the genuineness of which is certified to by Pere Andre, to whom the manuscript was handed by the rebel leader. We give a brief summary of the paper, with such extracts as our space will permit. The introduction treats of the origin of the Metis, and runs thus:

Jesus, Save Us! Mary, Intercede for Us! St. Joseph, Pray for Us!"

THE METIS OF THE NORTHWEST.

The paternal ancestors of the Metis were the former employes of the Hudson Bay and Northwest fur companies, and their maternal ancestors were Indian women of various tribes.

The French word "Metis" is derived from the Latin participle mixtus, which means "mixed:" in French, "mele;" it expresses well the idea that is sought to be conveyed.

However appropriate the corresponding English expression "halfbreed" might have been for the first generation of the mixture of blood, now that European blood and Indian blood are mixed in every degree, it is no longer general enough.

The French word "Metis" expresses the idea of this mixture in the most satisfactory manner possible, and thus becomes a proper race name.

A little observation, en passant, and without wishing to wound anybody.

Peoples who are ordinarily well bred and polite sometimes address a Metis thus: "You don't look like a Metis at all. You surely can't have much Indian blood. At any rate, you would pass for a pure white."

The Metis, rather disconcerted by the tone of this remark, would like to assert his origin on the one side as well as on the other. He is restrained by the fear of disturbing or altogether upsetting the speaker's complacency. Whilst he yet is hesitating which to choose amongst the different answers that suggest themselves to his mind, words to this effect put an end to his silence: "Ah, bah! You have almost no Indian blood, not any worth speaking of." This is how the Metis think of this matter in their own hearts. "It is true that our Indian origin is an humble one. But justice demands that we honor our mothers as well as our fathers. Why should we care to what degree exactly of mixture we possess European blood and Indian blood? If we feel ever so little gratitude and filial love towards one or the other, do they not constrain us to say: 'WE are METIS!'"

The paper continues, under the heading "The Metis Country:"

To have a pretty just idea of the condition of the Metis at the commencement of the year 1885 in the Northwest, and particularly in the Saskatchewan, it is necessary to know how they were situated before confederation.

They were people who had owned the territory of the Northwest. The Indian blood in their veins established their right or title to the soil. They had possession of this soil conjointly with the Indians. The landed value of the soil alone represented a large sum.

Let us speak only of the lands that are now comprised within the limits assigned to the Northwest, under this name, outside of Manitoba and Keewatin: We have a territory of about 1,195,720,000 acres in extent. By dividing this number by the figure of the Metis and Indian population, and supposing that they are equally numerous, they would divide the Northwest into two equal portions—our hypothesis, which is very near the truth, giving to the Metis and to the Indians each about 597,860,000 acres.

To get an idea of the Indian lands in the Northwest before confederation, let us say, at a rough guess, that these lands were worth to the Indian 15 cents an acre. Taking this modest valuation as a basis, the Northwest Indians, with their 597,860,000 superficial acres of land, possessed an estate something like $89,679,000.

But even here we have another consideration to take into account: the Metis, without having the ability of improving the land according to the developments and resources of an advanced civilization, nevertheless built on it, ploughed it, fenced it, and used it to far greater advantage than did the Indians; so that it certainly was worth at least twice as much to them as to the Indians, that is to say, that whilst the Indian might reasonably ask 15 cents an acre for his land, the Metis was justified in demanding 30 cents for his.

The Metis half of the Northwest, 597,860,000 acres, was therefore equivalent to a capital of about $179,358,000.

This was the amount of the Metis wealth in real estate before confederation.

The famous trade in furs, the operations of the Hudson Bay company, and the coming of the dominion are next traced. A graphic sketch of "The Metis Before Confederation" is given with a romantic description of their method of pursuing the buffalo. This portion to the ordinary reader is perhaps the most interesting of the whole paper and is therefore given in full:

The Metis by their superiority over the Indian tribes dominated them; but without abuse of power. Sometimes, on the hunting grounds, the Indians declared war against the Metis or stole their horses. Satisfaction was demanded. In case of refusal, the Métis nation went to war with the maicontens. But it must be noticed that it never indulged in aggressive strife. Its battles were those of self defence or of protection of their rights. On the other hand, with God's help it always was victorious over the tribes that attacked it. As a primitive, simple and plain-dealing people, blessed by Providence in a happy abundance of riches, and not endowed with any great ambition, the Metis needed no government. Nevertheless, when they went buffalo hunting, there naturally arose among them a conflict of interests. And as much to maintain order in their ranks as to guard themselves against horse-stealing and unfriendly raids, they organized and composed a camp. A chief would be chosen, twelve councillors were elected, with a public crier and guides. The soldiers formed groups of tens. Every hunter was a soldier. Every ten chose itself a captain. When came the time for military organization, properly speaking, the chief gave notice of it; the first soldier on hand indicated whom he wished for captain. Nine others approved this choice; so the captain of every ten soldiers found himself at the head of soldiers who were all the more willing to follow him everywhere that his commission over them was the outcome of their confidence in him and of their unanimous choice.

The hunting of the buffalo was done on horseback. It was a fine spectacle to see hundreds of racers rearing, neighing, dancing, pawing the ground with their ambitious feet, tugging at the bridle, asking to go by look, shake of the head and all manner of gestures; and these cavaliers of the first order sitting with assurance as if they were in their chairs, on their little saddles of soft leather, in the middle of the bead work flowers which ornamented them; with the elegant handles of their many-tongued whips at their wrists, their carbine in one hand and the reins in the other, keeping back their fiery horses, and saving them until they should get within range of the buffaloes.

The captains presided over the running, and saw that no one started before the signal of the captain in charge. As soon as the word was given the cavalcade dashed forward. A whirlwind of dust, obedient to the command, started at the same time. The buffalo, fleeing over the prairie, devoured space, but was soon come up to by the swift coursers. The horsemen entered pell-mell into the band of wild cattle, and vied in picking out the biggest animals; each one fired; all fired, trying not to hit each other, taking care of the horses and the men.

I have seen these runs. I have taken part in them. They are terrible. The skill of the hunters, their extreme attention, and, above all, Providence alone could prevent the accidents at the risk of which these chases took place.

From afar they presented the grand spectacle of a discharge of firearms in a cloud.

The council of hunters made regulations. They were called the laws of the prairie. The council was a provisional government. It also was a tribunal which had jurisdiction in regard to infractions of the regulations and to all differences arising between parties in the camp.

The captains, with their soldiers, carried out the orders and judgments of the council. In ordinary affairs the council acted on the authority that had been confided to it; but in matters of greater importance it appealed to the public, and gave its decisions only according to the majority of all the hunters.

This was the condition of a new yet civilized people, enjoying a government of its own, founded on true notions of public liberty and of equity. This provisional government, of simple mechanism, which was only called together for the general interest, serving without remuneration, organized everywhere where there gathered together sufficient of a caravan, and dying when it died out, was organized in the same fashion in all the Metis settlements where a certain diversity of interests tended to breed difficulties, where there were dangers to be avoided, hostilities to repel. The Metis settlements were the nuclei of the coming civilization. And their localities were so well chosen that they everywhere became centres to which immigration gathered, thence to colonize and spread in every direction.

The laws of the prairie followed the Metis like the mining regulations follow the miners in their workings.

The Hudson Bay company was surrounded by the Metis government in the whole fertile zone. It did not object to it. On the contrary, its factors and trappers in gangs, winter quarters, or Metis settlement, hunted, traded, and did business under the authority of the council of the prairie, and under the protection of the Metis laws. And this formed a rampart which it willingly accepted as a shelter. For not so long ago the Indians were barbarous to a degree much beyond what the dominion found them; they were numerous, at war with each other; war parties roved in all directions; the Crees, the Blackfeet, the Sioux of Minnesota, of Dakota, of Montana, all contended for the plume of bravery. What made them unexpectedly more to be feared then, perhaps, than before, was that by their relations with the whites and all sorts of people living a life of adventure, they found themselves, about thirty years ago, better armed than they had ever been before.

The Metis were the men who subdued these savage nations by their arms, and then pacified them by the cordial relations they kept up with them in times of peace. It was they who, at the price of their blood, brought tranquility to the Northwest.

"The Entry of Dominion Authority" is the heading of the next section, which traces in severe terms, but in a style clever, epigrammatic and almost dispassionate, the acquiring of the Northwest by Canada, the making of treaties with the Indians, the utter lack of consideration shown for the rights, claims and privileges of the Metis, and the ignoring of numerous petitions by the Ottawa government. A tribute to the ability and bravery of Gabriel Dumont is paid in the following:

On the south branch of the Saskatchewan some French Canadian Metis had settled. Their colony dated from '68. It had been founded by a body of about two hundred families. In this colony the Metis form of government existed, of which confederation could not become the depository without the consent of the people. As this consent was neither asked nor given, the council of the Metis of the Saskatchewan and their prairie laws continued to be the real government and the real laws of this country, and are virtually such at present.

At their head was a devoted man, always ready to do a service, hospitable, affable, a loyal and frank character, whom it was good to have for a friend, a hunter renowned in the whole Northwest, an able trader, but also a warrior, terrible to encounter, and noble when touched. The Blackfeet knew him as an intrepid and valiant man, the Crees respected him in war and loved him in peace. His reputation has long been established amongst the tribes who dwell at the foot of the Mountains of Stone, on the prairies, on the banks of the Red River beyond the frontier, from the sources of the Milky River, as far as below and along the Missouri, one of the most chivalrous men in the new world, Monsieur Gabriel Dumont, my relative.

His own second coming is then treated of. "I came," he says, "to petition for my people and for myself, to ask the dominion government what belonged to us, in the hope of obtaining at least something if we could not get complete satisfaction. I did not think of war." Reference is made to the cases of Maxime Lepine and Moise Ouellette, who are described as much wronged, courageous and honest men, and the paper concludes by charging England and confederation with "governing the Northwest and the Metis in a despotic manner, altogether contrary to the principles and aspirations of the United States of America."

Riel's Literary Legacies.

Winnipeg Cor. Montreal Star.

Although the paper on the Metis despatched to The Star is by far the most important and interesting that Riel left, there were other curious papers consigned to Father Andre.

The first is a book of about 100 pages of prophecies and visitations, mostly in French. These he rechristens "The Universe." He gives the present state of eminent men from the Emperor Charlemagne to Archbishop Bourget, and says the latter is a bigger saint than Loyola. He also gives revelations to Pope Leo respecting the new world. He thinks the Pope should have two residences, the other being Mount Royal, where he should reside some months in each year. He thinks there should be a council of some seventy Catholic dignitaries to look after the church in this continent.

The second book is of 148 pages, mainly revisions and largely fragmentary. In it is embraced a memorial to the Northwest council respecting his trial at Regina. He thinks he should have had a jury of twelve Frenchmen with a French judge. He traces the descent of the American Indians, saying those of the north are of Hebrew descent and those of the south Egyptian. He deals with the halfbreeds' rights to lands, and deals harshly with the Hudson Bay company.

—Young men, or middle-aged ones, suffering from nervous debility and kindred weaknesses should send 10 cents in stamps for illustrated book suggesting sure means of cure. Address, World's Dispensary Medical Association, 663 Main street, Buffalo, N.Y.

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—Catarrh, on account of its prevalence in this country, is attracting a good deal of attention, more especially now when there is a probability of a visit from cholera, for where either is a muco-purulent discharge, such discharge forms a nidus very inviting to cholera germs, and very favorable for their reproduction in a more violent form, thus placing sufferers from catarrh at a great disadvantage in the event of a cholera visitation.

Catarrh is a contagious disease. It is a muco-purulent discharge, caused by the presence of a vegetable parasite in the lining membrane of the nose. These parasites reproduce themselves in great multitudes, and each generation is more virulent. They spread up the nostrils and down the fauces or back of the throat, causing ulceration of the throat, up the eustachian tubes, causing deafness, burrowing in the vocal cords, causing hoarseness; usurping the proper function of the bronchial tubes, ending in pulmonary consumption and death.

The reason that catarrh has become so prevalent a disease is entirely due to the fact that it has not been understood. Physicians have been unanimous in treating it as a simple inflammation of the membrane and have signally failed to produce cures, but microscopic research has revealed the presence of the parasite, and now sufferers from this disease who appreciate the fact that it is by way of its secondary effects a most deadly one, will be glad to learn that a wonderfully successful treatment has been formulated, whereby the most aggravated cases of catarrh have been permanently cured in from one to three simple applications. The interesting pamphlet descriptive of this new treatment, from which we glean the above, is sent free to all applicants on receipt of stamp by A. H. Dixon & Son, 305 King street west, Toronto, Canada.—The Star. 15

A Cure for Drunkenness.

—Opium, morphine and kindred habits. Valuable treatise sent free. The medicine may be given in a cup of tea or coffee, and without the knowledge of the person taking it, if so desired. Send two 3c. stamps for full particulars and testimonials of those who have been cured. Address M. V. Luban, agency, 47 Wellington street east, Toronto, Canada. ed

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—So rapidly does lung irritation spread and deepen, that often in a few weeks a simple cough culminates in tubercular consumption. Give heed to a cough, there is always danger in delay, get a bottle of Bickle's Anti-Consumptive Syrup and cure yourself. It is a medicine unsurpassed for all throat and lung troubles. It is compounded from several herbs, each one of which stands at the head of the list as exerting a wonderful influence in curing consumption and all lung diseases.

—Bilious complaints, constipation and nausea are all relieved and cured by Ayer's Pills.

—One trial of Mother Graves' Worm Exterminator will convince you that it has no equal as a worm medicine. Buy a bottle and see if it does not please you.

Bon Voyage.

"Yes, Bobby," said young Featherly "I am going west for a little trip."

"Are you going for your health?" inquired Bobby, with solicitude.

"Well, not altogether for my health, although I shall derive some benefit, no doubt."

"Sister Clara hopes you will."

"I say, Bobby," whispered Featherly, "did your sister say that she hoped my trip would do me good?"

"Yes. She told ma last night that if Mr. Featherly went west she hoped he would go for good."

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—If a few grains of common sense could be infused into the thick noddles of those who perpetually and alternately irritate and weaken their stomachs and bowels with drastic purgatives, they would use the highly accredited and healthful laxative and tonic, Northrop & Lyman's Vegetable Discovery and Dyspeptic Cure, which causes "good digestion to wait on appetite, and health on both."

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To the Last Fly.

From the St. James' Gazette.

Ah, little fly,
Frail relic of the joyous season sped!
Winter is nigh,
And soon wilt thou be numbered with the dead.
Where is the dusky Chloe thou didst woo
In circling dalliance the long day through?
Where are thy pale-wing'd comrades ev'ry one?
Fled with the roses and the summer sun!
October's leaves are falling, sad and sere.
The air is chilling and the moon is gray;
The lifetime of thy tribe hath passed away,
And yet thou still dost linger with us here.

Stay, little fly!
Nay, deem not that I bid thee stay with me,
But thither hie,
Nor am I careful whither thither be.
Go, seek thy vanish'd Chloe once again
Through the Sahara of the window-pane,
Or flock ray ceiling's purity, or cowl
Over my best-loved pictures on the wall,
Or even in my milk-jug drown thy woes.
I would not curb thy liberty, so thou
Will cease this active survey of my brow
And keep thy tickling footsteps off my nose.

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11, 12, 13, 14, beautiful frames fitted for cabinet photos, each	1 50
15, a lady's fine gold watch, good value	35 00
16, 17, 18, 19, cabinet easel frames, lined with silk, very fine, each	0 75
20, enlarged photo, finished in water colors, in a fine frame	6 00
21, 22, 23, 24, enlarged photos, each	1 25
25, enlarged photo, finished in India ink in a fine frame	4 50
26, 27, 28, 29, frames fitted for cabinet photos, each	1 50
30, a very fine wall pocket, with water color flowers on satin, for the last answer received	2 50

Successful competitors will be written to when it is decided who they are, so that they may forward the Photo that they want copied into the different styles here mentioned. We are well known and will faithfully carry out the list as represented. Any one can compete as many times as they like. For every 50 cents received we will send a very fine picture, and the names carefully taken and prizes awarded the 16th December. Successful names will be published in Guelph Mercury of December 18th. We have taken 18 first prizes and 5 diplomas for our work. Address CLEMENT L. READ, Artist, Guelph, Ont.

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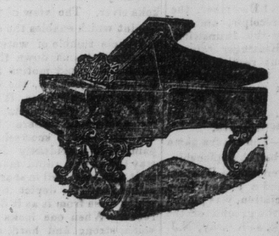

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